

CASE# 13-53846

TO JUDGE STEVEN W. RHODES

DEAR JUDGE RHODES

I BEGAN WORKING FOR THE CITY OF DETROIT IN 1977 AND RETIRED IN 2008. I AM DIVORCED AND HAVE NO DEPENDENTS. MY PARENTS ARE BOTH DECEASED AND MY ONLY BROTHER LIVES IN ARIZONA. I WORKED AS A CLERICAL AND DUE TO THE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE THROUGH CITY OF DETROIT EMPLOYMENT, RETIRING AS HEAD CONSTRUCTION INSPECTOR FOR CITY ENGINEERING. A SINGLE WOMAN I LIVED MY LIFE IN A RESPONSIBLE WAY. IN 1988 I BOUGHT A HOUSE IN NORTHWEST DETROIT FOR \$25,000. I DIDN'T BELIEVE I WOULD BE ABLE TO EVER PAY IT AT MY CLERICAL PAY BUT I GOT A PROMOTION TO CONSTRUCTION INSPECTOR AND BEGAN WORKING OVERTIME AS REQUIRED BY MY WORK. I WORKED IN THE STREET, OFTEN BY MYSELF, IN ALL WEATHER IF CONTRACTORS WERE WORKING AND SOMETIMES AT NIGHT, DURING CONSTRUCTION SEASON I SOMETIMES WORKED 60-70 HOURS PER WEEK FROM SUN UP TO SUN DOWN. I INVESTED IN THE CITY ANNUITY PLAN TO SAVE FOR MY FUTURE AND WHEN I RETIRED I ROLLED IT OVER INTO MY PENSION BECAUSE THE STATE CONSTITUTION SAID MY PENSION WAS GUARANTEED. SOME COWORKERS SAID DON'T DO IT AND MANY PEOPLE TOOK THEIR MONEY OUT BUT I WANTED TO DO THE RIGHT THING AND

NOT DEPLETING THE PENSION FUND.

THEN IN 2007 FORECLOSURES BEGAN HITTING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS. IN 2008 THE HOUSING BUBBLE BURST AND I WATCHED THE NEIGHBORHOODS I WORKED IN DETERIORATED AND MELT AWAY. MY NEIGHBORHOOD AND NEW HOMES BUILT SOUTH OF ME WERE VACANT MY HOME IS NOW WORTHLESS - BRICK HOMES IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD - BRICK HOMES - SOLD FOR LESS THAN \$10,000. THE BANKS MADE BILLIONS AND WERE BAILED OUT BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

IF I WATCH A REVOLVING DOOR OF VULTURES BUYING UP HOUSES IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD AT TAX FORECLOSURE - RENT THEM OUT AND LET THEM GO INTO TAX FORECLOSURE AGAIN. THE WATER BILLS ARE ON THE TAX ROLLS AND AREN'T PAID EITHER.

BECAUSE I WORKED A LOT OF OVERTIME MY PENSION IS MORE THAN A CLERICAL WORKER BUT I EARNED EVERY PENNY OF IT AND HEALTH CARE THAT WAS THE COMMITMENT FOR MY WORK. I THOUGHT I WAS SECURE BUT NOW I FEAR FOR MY FUTURE - THE REST OF MY LIFE. CAN I AFFORD LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE; CAN I CONTINUE TO SERVE MY NEIGHBORHOOD HELPING TO HOLD IT TOGETHER; DO I NEED TO FIND A JOB AND KICK OUT A YOUNG PERSON THAT NEEDS TO START THEIR LIFE.

HANDS OFF OUR PENSIONS.

Cheryl Labash